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## JOHN BRIGHT, M. P., ON ARBITRATION.

The friends of peace in England recently had a grand demonstration in Manchester, where this popular orator and statesman made two very able speeches, from one of which the following extracts are taken, strongly confirming the views just advanced in the Senate of the United States:—

The first thing that strikes me, in reading the resolution on Arbitration is, that it is so exceedingly reasonable that everybody will say—it is a very good thing, *if you can only do it*. But on this question, as on many others, I find that some of the most unconquerable of our opponents are just those who agree with us in the abstract; who say that the principle is very good, if the world were ready for it. They approve of it wonderfully at a distance; but you cannot get them to lift a hand for the purpose of bringing it any nearer. Now, the resolution states, that this is admitted by everybody; for it says, ‘that an appeal to the sword can settle no question on any principle of equity and right.’ That may be taken for granted; for I believe no man supposes for a moment, that at the termination of a war, the general result and settlement, whatever it may be, has any kind of reference whatever to the origin of the war, or to the justice of the matter originally in dispute. I suspect, if any man, versed in the history of this country, or of any country, were to investigate the causes out of which various contests have sprung, and then bring before the reader those things which were settled in some shape at the conclusion of the war, he would find almost invariably that there was no kind of relation whatever between the beginning and the ending of this most melancholy business. The fact is, the decision is with the strong; and the strong unfortunately have too often little regard for justice. Commanders, officers and men may go to prayers before the battle; but we have no authority whatever for believing that, with regard to the battles of modern times, there is any particular interference of Providence on behalf of what is just and right. We generally find the result to depend upon the magnitude of the forces, the discipline of the men, and the skill and sagacity of the commanders. Now, we are taking a term, when we use the word Arbitration, which is applied to the existing system. We often hear now of ‘the arbitrament of the sword.’ But it appears to me that the arbitration we *now* have, is of the clumsiest and most unsatisfactory sort. *Our* arbitrators amount, I think, to something over two hundred thousand men; a most unsatisfactory number to decide upon the justice of any question. Well, this standing arbitration that we now have, the arbitration of the sword, incurs an expenditure of about \$80,000,000 per annum. I think, if we look over all the actions of all men, or of all nations, in all times, we shall not be able to discover any one in which there is less of common sense, less of reason, less of fair expectation of any practical good result, than in the course which this nation, and other nations, take in the maintenance of these vast armaments for settling those things which the armaments themselves are never known satisfactorily to settle.

So far, then, we are pretty nearly agreed with our opponents. We have not many opponents on principle, so far as this resolution goes; but we have those who think we are impracticable in proposing what is impossible. The question really before us on this resolution, seems to be, whether it is possible to make the change which we propose and recommend to our country, and to the world? Well, I believe it would be easy to show, that a great many changes have been made, and which all men agree to have been admirable changes, but which most men at one time agreed to be changes that were absolutely impossible. There is a species of warfare, now happily

nearly extinct in this country, I mean that of duelling. It is quite impossible for any man to turn back to a newspaper, if he is fortunate enough to find one, of a hundred years ago, or to read the correspondence of politicians living at any time in the last century, and especially is it impossible to learn anything of the habits of our countrymen over St. George's Channel in Ireland, without coming to the conclusion, that the commonest matters of dispute, which now nobody thinks of quarrelling about, were formerly made subjects of this sort of arbitration, either by the sword or the pistol.

But the system of duelling is altogether changed. One of the last duels was certainly one of the most successful in turning the whole system into ridicule. Two members of the late Parliament contested a borough in the south of England. They had a quarrel,—I suppose about treating, or bribery, or intimidation, or some of those practices which take place at our elections so often; and it was thought necessary to go into a neighboring county to fight it out. I believe they went in the same coach—one inside, I fancy, and one on the box; and, when they were just about to fire, there was an immense alarm created by the springing up of a cock-pheasant; and these men, who could not agree to settle a dispute of this nature, but were so valorous that they must have recourse to arms, I believe, upon a sudden, they ran as fast as their legs could carry them, suspecting, in this cock-pheasant, a policeman. Now, I was delighted with that duel, and I was delighted with the letter which the Cock-Pheasant wrote to the Times immediately afterwards, because it covered the whole thing with ridicule; and I said I am much obliged to those two gentlemen for what they have done, for I think, after this, surely there is no man in England or Ireland who will ever go out again to fight a duel.

Another thing, too, shows how opinion has changed upon that point. I was, not very long ago, in the shop of a gunsmith in London, and heard there, what I have not the least reason to doubt, that it is the commonest thing in the world now, if there is to be a duel, that some friend of the parties procures the pistols, and takes very good care to be supplied with balls from the same place, which are made of a material which Signor Blitz, I believe, has occasionally used in his exhibitions,—they are something like balls in appearance; but when they are put in the pistol, and the ramrod goes down, they all go to dust. Now, that is what duelling has come to; but it is only a few years since duelling was believed to be as indispensable for the settlement of private quarrels, as wars are now believed to be indispensable between communities and nations. I believe, in spite of all the ridicule some parties bestow on this which we believe to be reasonable and Christian, that the time will come—and much faster than some believe—when war between nations will be considered as brutal and idiotic as duelling is now considered amongst almost all classes of the community. What is wanted is, that the change which has taken place amongst us as individuals, should take place amongst communities and nations.

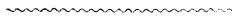
Now, is it not as possible to form a public opinion in Europe as it is in England? Of course, the labor will be far greater; but then the object is greater, and there are many laborers in the field; and what is now done by tens and twenties, may be done by hundreds and millions. Take a point in which the influence of public opinion has prevailed. After the Hungarian war, some of the patriotic leaders of the revolution took refuge in Turkey; demands were made by Austria and Russia on Turkey for those leaders, and had they have been given up, we know to what end they would have been surrendered; but Turkey did *not* give them up. It is the recognized policy of all civilized nations, that, although you may demand a man who is a murderer or a robber, still no one nation has a right to demand of another, that any person fleeing from its power on political grounds, shall be given

up to the avenging punishment of the government it has opposed. Well, public opinion has settled that matter. It has been felt that no man would be safe, that all political opposition to governments, all contests for political rights, would be at an end, if, when the contest was over, those who had failed, should find no refuge in any other country. Every man feeling that he might himself be liable at some time to the consequences of such a system, it has been agreed among the civilized governments of the world, that that law and that practice should exist. There might be other cases adduced to show, that public opinion has formed a code of laws among nations; and from this I would argue, that, with regard to this point, a new principle now claims to be introduced into that code of public opinion.

The other day, the *Times* newspaper, which is taking a very judicious and admirable course on almost every matter connected with the United States, commenting upon a dinner which has recently been given to Mr. Ingersoll, the American minister, at Birmingham, said what ought to be done between England and America—we should resolve never to go to war. But how are you to resolve never to go to war with the United States? Does any man believe that no points of difference will ever arise? Don't we think there are people in the United States reckless enough—as there is always a class in this country—to get up uneasiness and excitement, and, if possible, even to get up war? But the good men, the intelligent men, the moral men, the Christian men, the bulk of men in both countries, are in favor of peace. Why, then, should not this great majority in both countries resolve, that we will never go to war?—that, as regards the treatment of one nation by the other, we have no idea of swindling, or cajoling, or dragooning the United States, nor have they any such idea of us? We can fight, and so can they. The resources of the two countries may be said to be almost inexhaustible; but that only measures the amount of damage which each country might do to the other, and only gives you sure indication of the necessity and the wisdom of never going to war with each other. Take the fisheries question that has lately been discussed. That is a case in point. What was the first thing done? People here wanted to know how many ships were going; and in America a squadron that had been ordered to Japan, was countermanded, and the ships were to go to that part of the ocean where these fisheries are principally carried on. But suppose we had an arbitration clause in our treaty with the United States, it would not have been a question of sending ships; nobody in England would have written an article in favor of sending ships of war; but the first thing that would have been done, would be to republish in every paper in England the arbitration clauses, and then the sole matter to be discussed would be this: Where shall we find the men to whom both nations will trust the decision of this question? And I may say for myself, that I believe there are men in the United States to whom alone—as I believe there are men in this country to whom alone—both countries might commit the decision upon such a question; and I believe it would be decided according to that which was just to both of them. And there are other countries—Russians, French, Prussians, Germans; in fact you have all the world to choose from; you have all your great judges and great jurists, your excellent men of every class in every country; and from these every nation, having such an arrangement as this, might choose the men of foremost mark in the world, who for intellect and for moral qualities are unsurpassed, and who would stake their whole character with their existing countrymen, and with all posterity, that they would give a just decision on the matter referred to them.

We pretend to lead the world in some things. But if we here on this island, with a mercantile navy surpassing that of almost all the world, have a

people pugnacious beyond all former example ; if we have an industry so productive, that the thousands of millions which have been spent in former wars, have not yet pauperised and exhausted us ; if we have glory recorded on our pages of history, so that the most gluttonous amongst us ought to be satisfied, and ask no more ; and if, besides that, we have liberal institutions which give to the people of this country a measure of contentment that gives security to the government ; then, I say, are we not in a position, before all other nations, of offering to the nations of Europe, and to the United States, a new policy, a policy which, though it differs as much as white from black from the policy of past times, yet shall be one that in the future will give greater security to governments, and greater happiness and contentment to the people, and will promote the advancement and progress of all that is good in the world, infinitely beyond anything that can be hoped for from the most glorious and bloody conflicts of armed men ?



#### STATE PEACE CONVENTION IN VERMONT.

The friends of Peace in Vermont, in response to a call signed by some of the most distinguished men in the State, held a Convention at Pittsford, on the 23d of February. Rev. THOMAS A. MERRILL, D. D., was chosen President, Revs. A. C. HAND and D. H. LOVELAND, Vice-Presidents, and Rev. D. W. DAYTON, Secretary.

Though the weather was extremely unfavorable, a goodly number of earnest and devoted friends of the cause were in attendance, and continued their deliberations with much spirit and interest, through three sessions, till late at night. A series of strong and pertinent resolutions were passed, and measures taken to bring the subject of peace before the whole people of Vermont, but especially to secure a grand State Memorial for Peace to our national rulers. For these purposes, they appointed a Standing State Committee, with a Corresponding Secretary, under the following resolutions, viz. :—

*Resolved*, That a standing Peace Committee for the State of Vermont be now appointed, with power to increase their number at discretion, and to continue in office till successors shall be chosen.

*Resolved*, That the State Committee be requested to issue an Address to the public, signed by the Chairman, on behalf of the objects of this Convention.

*Resolved*, That the Corresponding Secretary of the State Committee be requested, on behalf of the Friends of Peace represented in this Convention, to take such measures, by correspondence and otherwise, as he may deem expedient, and find practicable, to procure such a memorial [alluded to above] from Vermont, and also from as many other States of our Confederacy as possible.